

REMARKS

Claims remaining in the present patent application are numbered 1-5, 7-11, 13, 14, 16-26, and 28-31. Claims 6, 12, 15, and 27 have been canceled. The rejections and comments of the Examiner set forth in the Office Action dated September 24, 2004 have been carefully considered by the Applicant. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to consider and allow the remaining claims.

Acceptance of Allowed Claims

Claims 16-21 are allowed. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the allowance of Claims 16-21 as allowable subject matter.

Newly Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 4, 5, 6, 15, 25, 26, and 27 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of their base claim and any intervening claims.

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 1

Applicant has herein amended into independent Claim 1 the subject matter of Claim 6, which was cited on page 7 of the present Office Action as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of its base Claim

and any intervening claims. As a result, newly amended independent Claim 1 is now allowable over the prior art, and a discussion of the 35 U.S.C. §102(e) rejection of that Claim is moot at this time. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 1, as amended, overcomes the Examiner's basis for rejection, and as such Claims 2-5 and 7-10 which depend on newly amended independent Claim 1 are also in a condition for allowance as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 11

Applicant has herein amended into independent Claim 11 the subject matter of Claim 15 and intervening Claim 12, in which Claim 15 was cited on page 7 of the present Office Action as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. As a result, newly amended independent Claim 11 is now allowable over the prior art, and a discussion of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of that Claim is moot at this time. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 11, as amended, overcomes the Examiner's basis for rejection, and as such Claims 13, 14, and 16-21 which depend on newly amended independent Claim 11 are also in a condition for allowance as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 22

Applicant has herein amended into independent Claim 22 the subject matter of Claim 27, which was cited on page 7 of the present Office Action as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of its base Claim and any intervening claims. As a result, newly amended independent Claim 22 is now allowable over the prior art, and a discussion of the 35 U.S.C. §102(e) rejection of that Claim is moot at this time. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 22, as amended, overcomes the Examiner's basis for rejection, and as such Claims 23-26 and 28-31 which depend on newly amended independent Claim 22 are also in a condition for allowance as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

CONCLUSION

In light of the amendments and arguments presented herein, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejected Claims for allowance thereof.

Based on the arguments presented above, Applicant respectfully asserts that Claims 1-5, 7-11, 13, 14, 16-26, and 28-31 overcome the rejections of record. Therefore, Applicant respectfully solicits allowance of these Claims.

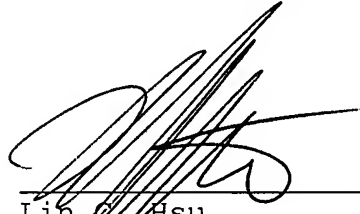
The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative if the Examiner believes such action would expedite resolution of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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